



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT IN MINDANAO

BACKGROUND



Mindanao, the Philippines' southernmost region, is a top producer of crops, marine, forest, and mineral products. The region's extraordinary natural resource base has the potential to make a more significant contribution to the food, fiber and energy needs of the nation, if not for the continuing violent conflict and failures of governance that pose significant obstacles to its sustainable development. Today, 3,000 remote communities --- mostly in Mindanao and many in conflict-affected and alienated areas --- remain without electricity, a basic tool of enterprise, communication and social development. Much of the region's valuable old growth forests, fisheries and coastal resources are subject to de facto open access, the product of weak governance and lack of political will.

USAID's Energy and Environment program is working to address these systemic challenges by improving environmental governance and the development of renewable energy resources. Approximately 60% of the program's resources are devoted to working with local government communities to improve governance of forests, fisheries and coastal resources and solid waste, and to introduce renewable energy powered electricity in communities of former rebel combatants.

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Improving the lives of communities of former rebel soldiers through renewable energy.

Using solar power and micro hydro systems to generate electricity, communities of remote and conflict-affected areas expand their economic and educational activities even at night. These communities also benefit from the processing, packaging and marketing of their agricultural products by using equipment powered by renewable energy technology such as fish and seaweed driers and satellite telephones.



Empowering communities to protect coastal-marine resources in some of the most remote areas.

USAID activities build the capability of local institutions and communities to establish and manage marine protected areas more effectively. These activities reduce destructive fishing practices, such as the use of dynamite, cyanide, fine mesh nets and over-fishing; consequently, these activities help communities increase their fish catch, both for local consumption and sale.



Assisting local communities to resolve natural resource conflicts.

USAID supports the effort of public law interest groups to provide legal assistance and training to communities and organizations in order to resolve disputes and legal issues concerning the use, access and management of their natural resources.



Improving the management of forest resources.

USAID helped the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao pass the Sustainable Forest Act through a highly participatory and transparent process that promotes the use of community-based forest management. Activities support the implementation of the Act, strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws, encourage agro-forestry production such as cacao propagation, and provide for greater public participation in forest management.



Developing an Integrated Solid Waste Management system

Activities build the capabilities of local governments and communities to assess, plan, procure, dispose and manage solid waste. Recycling and composting efforts generate income while reducing health hazards and environmental problems.